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UNITED STATES URGES SUDAN TO ACCEPT NEW U.N. PEACEKEEPERS

Security Council authorizes 20,000-person peace mission for Darfur 1

IRAN'S DEFIANCE OF WORLD "REGRETTABLE," U.S. DIPLOMAT SAYS

Ambassador Schulte urges Iran not to choose further isolation, sanctions 3

ARMY HAS DESTROYED HALF OF ALL CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN U.S. STOCKPILE

More than 1.7 million munitions of total original stockpile now destroyed 4

WAR ON TERROR THE "DECISIVE" 21ST CENTURY STRUGGLE, BUSH SAYS

President says United States will not leave Iraq "until victory is achieved" 5

FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES AFTER 9/11 FOCUS OF WEBCHAT

Hudson Institute president to discuss challenges five years after 9/11 attacks 6

UNITED STATES URGES SUDAN TO ACCEPT NEW U.N. PEACEKEEPERS

Security Council authorizes 20,000-person peace mission for Darfur

By Judy Aita
Washington File UN Correspondent

United Nations -- The United States has called on Sudan to accept the newly passed Security Council resolution that authorizes the United Nations to take over peacekeeping operations in Darfur.

The Security Council adopted a resolution August 31 asking the U.N. secretary-general to arrange for the rapid deployment of more than 20,000 military and civilian personnel and 16 police units of the U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). The vote was 12-0 with China, Russia and Qatar abstaining.

The resolution, co-sponsored by the United States and the United Kingdom, "invites the consent" of the government in Khartoum. It also provides support for the African Union-led forces (AMIS) now in the country, including air, ground and engineering assets.

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton said it is imperative for the council to move immediately to implement the resolution fully "to stop the tragic events unfolding in Darfur. Every day we delay only adds to the suffering of the Sudanese people and extends the genocide."

Calling on Sudan to cooperate with the United Nations, Bolton pointed out that the resolution “invites the government of Sudan to consent to deployment, though nothing in this language requires their consent. We expect their full and unconditional cooperation and support with the new U.N. peacekeeping force.

“Failure on the government of Sudan’s part to do so will significantly undermine the Darfur Peace Agreement and prolong the humanitarian crisis in Darfur,” he said.

The ambassador said what is needed from Sudan’s government is “acquiescence.”

“Silence gives consent,” he told journalists after the meeting. “If there isn’t any obstructionism, then the U.N. operation could proceed. We’re not looking for billboards on the highway into Khartoum welcoming the U.N.”

Following passage of the resolution, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer and Kristen Silverberg, the assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs, spoke to reporters at the State Department in Washington.

Frazer, who had just returned from Sudan where she met with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, called the resolution’s passage “the key step to ultimately ending the crisis in Darfur.”

The United States, she reiterated, continues to support strengthening the African Union force in Darfur and making the African Union force the core of a U.N. mission in Darfur.

Silverberg added: “We’re very pleased by the step the council took today in passing this resolution. We think it lays the groundwork for an effective multilateral intervention in Sudan to help bring an end to the violence.”

With that, she said, “we’ll now begin the hard work of working with DPKO [the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations] and with all of our U.N. partners to begin to build this force of up to 17,000 military personnel, and up to 3,000 civilian police, with a substantial African element at the core of the mission.”

Significant logistical work already has taken place at the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations, she said, and with the passage of the resolution, “we can begin finalizing those details and begin deployment as soon as possible.”

The African Union said that it cannot continue to field its 7,000-troop mission and agreed that the United Nations should take over operations. But Sudan strongly has opposed a U.N.-led force.

Nevertheless, the sponsors of the resolution said they do not expect UNMIS to fight its way into the region. The resolution allows the United Nations to finalize the extensive planning and logistical work needed to field such a major peacekeeping operation and provide for a smooth transition from AMIS to the United Nations. It is also a strong signal of the Security Council’s determination to live up to its responsibilities to the people of Darfur, they said.

The resolution authorizes the U.N. peacekeepers to “use all necessary means” to protect U.N. facilities and personnel, ensure the freedom of movement of U.N. personnel and humanitarian workers and prevent attacks and threats against civilians. U.N. troops will be stationed in buffer zones and demilitarized zones and inside camps for internally displaced persons.

UNMIS also will monitor movements of government troops and rebel groups, seize or collect weapons that violate cease-fire and peace agreements, and help with the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement.

The council has set September 8 for a high-level meeting to discuss the situation with Sudanese officials and representatives from other organizations such as the African Union, the Arab League and the Islamic Conference.

IRAN'S DEFIANCE OF WORLD "REGRETTABLE," U.S. DIPLOMAT SAYS

Ambassador Schulte urges Iran not to choose further isolation, sanctions

By Jeffrey Thomas
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Calling Iran's continued defiance of the international community over its nuclear program "regrettable," a senior U.S. diplomat is urging the Islamic republic not to choose further isolation and sanction.

The diplomat, Ambassador Gregory Schulte, was responding to a report August 31 by Mohammed ElBaradei, the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). At a meeting in Vienna, Austria, ElBaradei told the U.N. Security Council and the IAEA "Iran's authorities have failed to comply with the demands of the U.N. Security Council and failed to cooperate with the IAEA," said Schulte, who serves as the U.S. permanent representative to the IAEA.

Schulte said the report documented more than a dozen examples of Iran's failures to answer IAEA questions or to provide necessary access to information, individuals and facilities.

"Iran's authorities still won't explain the full nature of Iran's centrifuge program and its connections to Iran's military and missile programs and to the A.Q. Kahn network, an illicit black market in nuclear weapons technology," said Schulte, whose remarks September 1 are part of an ongoing U.S. Department of State online discussion in Persian that began on August 14 and is scheduled to run through September 15.

Although Iranian officials have maintained that Iran's nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only, Schulte cited examples from the latest IAEA report that support international suspicions that Teheran in fact has a nuclear weapons program.

"Iran's authorities still won't turn over a document, acquired from the A.Q. Khan network, on fabricating nuclear warhead components," Schulte said. "Instead, it forced IAEA inspectors to destroy their notes on this document." A.Q. Khan, the former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, was removed from his position in 2001 amid growing international concern that he had sold nuclear technology to countries such as North Korea. In 2004, Khan confessed he also had sold nuclear weapons technology to Libya and Iran.

Schulte said the new report also revealed that IAEA inspectors had found new traces of highly enriched uranium. "Why have these traces been found at a waste site, at a facility disguised as a watch factory, on equipment taken from a military facility?" he asked. "Iran's authorities won't give the answers -- and countries across the world are increasingly suspicious."

In addition, the report documents Iran's continued pursuit of uranium enrichment in defiance of the international community and U.N. Security Council requirements, Schulte said.

"These activities -- conducted at a facility once hidden from both the world and the Iranian people -- are not necessary for Iran to benefit from civil nuclear power. But they are a necessary step in learning how to produce the material for nuclear weapons," Schulte said.

Iran responded ambiguously on August 22 to a package of incentives provided by the five permanent Security Council members -- China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States -- along with Germany (collectively known as the P5+1) to halt its enrichment activities. But subsequent statements of senior Iranian officials have made clear that Iran does not intend to meet the conditions set by the P5+1 and the Security Council, which included an August 31 deadline.

After receiving the IAEA report August 31, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton said Iran, by not suspending its uranium enrichment activities, is defying the international community and should be sanctioned.

According to Schulte, the refusal of Iran's leadership to suspend all enrichment and reprocessing activities by August 31 in accord with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1696 is regrettable not only because the Security Council now will impose sanctions, further isolating and tarnishing the image of Iran, but also "because the pursuit of nuclear weapons by Iran's leadership will only make the Middle East a more dangerous place."

"Iran's President recently tried to take attention off Iran's nuclear program by calling for a free and open debate with the American President," Schulte noted. "It is sad and ironic that the Iranian regime doesn't allow free and open debate in Iran. The Islamic Republic is facing a major choice: cooperation, negotiation, and new opportunities for trade and development, or further isolation and sanction.

"The people of Iran should be able to contribute to this choice," said Schulte, the U.S. permanent representative to the IAEA and the U.N. Mission in Vienna, Austria. "We all hope that Iran's leaders make the right one."

More information on Schulte's webchat can be found on USINFO's Persian Web site. The transcript (in English) of his views on the P5+1 incentive package also is available.

ARMY HAS DESTROYED HALF OF ALL CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN U.S. STOCKPILE

More than 1.7 million munitions of total original stockpile now destroyed

Washington -- Fifty percent of the total munitions in the United States' declared chemical weapons stockpile has been destroyed, the U.S. Army announced August 30.

The 50 percent figure represents more than 1.7 million munitions of the total stockpile originally estimated, according to the Army's Chemical Materials Agency. That includes bombs, rockets, mortars, projectiles, land mines and spray tanks filled with nerve agents (including sarin and VX), plus blister agents (including mustard gas). The total destroyed to date represents 39 percent of the U.S. stockpile by weight.

The Army says the 50 percent milestone "demonstrates the United States' commitment to its international obligations as a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)."

The Chemical Weapons Convention, which entered into force April 29, 1997, bans the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention and direct or indirect transfer of chemical weapons. It also prohibits the use or preparation for use of chemical weapons and the assistance, encouragement or inducement of anyone else to engage in activities prohibited by the convention.

The United States ratified the convention in 1997.

The U.S. Chemical Materials Agency has been disposing of chemical weapons since 1990. In that year, it began to dispose of munitions at a destruction facility on Johnston Atoll, which is more than 1,290 kilometers southwest of Honolulu. Complete destruction of that stockpile was achieved in 2000, and the Army says the site “remains a wildlife refuge.”

After Johnston Atoll, disposal efforts were initiated in Utah (1996), Alabama (2003), Oregon (2004), and Indiana and Arkansas (2005). The first site within the United States to destroy its stockpile completely was Aberdeen, Maryland (2006).

To accomplish the destruction of half of the national stockpile, the Chemical Materials Agency had to overcome permitting delays and facility work stoppages, it said. In particular, the agency stated, “delays resulted from the challenges associated with obtaining, modifying and/or closing environmental permits.” There were also unexpected facility work stoppages to evaluate and correct problems, CMA said.

In July, the United States submitted a draft request to the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons that would extend the deadline for the destruction of the entire U.S. chemical weapons stockpile from April 2007 to April 2012.

Ambassador Eric Javits, head of the U.S. delegation to the council, has stated that it took the United States “longer than anticipated to build facilities and to obtain the necessary permits and consent to begin destruction of chemical weapons, and we have found that, once operating, our facilities have not destroyed weapons as rapidly as we initially projected.”

WAR ON TERROR THE “DECISIVE” 21ST CENTURY STRUGGLE, BUSH SAYS

President says United States will not leave Iraq “until victory is achieved”

Washington -- President Bush says the War on Terror is “the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century,” pitting free nations against those who employ violence to impose a “dark vision of tyranny” across the world.

In the first of a scheduled series of five speeches leading up to the fifth anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks against New York and Washington, the president told an audience in Salt Lake City August 31, “We will not allow the terrorists to dictate the future of this century, so we will defeat them in Iraq.”

The United States bears a responsibility to the Iraqi people to help them achieve the freedom they desire, and is working with Iraqi leaders who can count on American partnership so long as they promote freedom and democracy, Bush said.

U.S. forces will not leave Iraq “until victory is achieved,” even though the president warned of more difficulties ahead. “This is a pivotal moment for the Middle East. The world is watching, and in Iraq the forces of freedom will prevail,” Bush said.

The United States has a “straightforward choice” in its approach to the Middle East, Bush said. The United States can help lead the region toward a more hopeful future, or it can allow the Middle East to follow the course on

which it was headed before September 11, 2001, and leave future generations “a region dominated by terrorist states and radical dictators armed with nuclear weapons.”

The president said that despite sectarian and geographic differences, the terrorist groups now at work constitute a “worldwide network” of radicals who are using terror to kill or intimidate those who stand in the way of their ideology.

Bush described them as a “self-appointed few” who are trying to impose their views on the world and compared them to totalitarian groups like the Nazis that the world confronted in the 20th century. Countries that harbor or support terrorists are enemies of the United States, he reiterated.

Turning to Iran, which faces an August 31 deadline from the U.N. Security Council to stop its uranium enrichment and reprocessing, Bush said the international community has offered that country a better course for the future if it abandons its quest for nuclear weapons.

However, he said, Iran has responded with “further defiance and delay.” The United States will continue to seek a diplomatic solution to the conflict, but Bush added that “there must be consequences” for Iran’s behavior.

FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES AFTER 9/11 FOCUS OF WEBCHAT

Hudson Institute president to discuss challenges five years after 9/11 attacks

Washington -- Foreign policy challenges five years after the attacks of September 11, 2001, are the subject of a USINFO Webchat.

Join Herbert London (http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/london_12_sept_2006.html) a contributing author to the State Department’s latest eJournal USA, Rebuilding and Resilience Five Years After 9/11, for an online discussion September 12 from 9:30 a.m. (1330 GMT) coinciding with the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

London is president of Hudson Institute, a non-partisan policy research organization based in New York City dedicated to research and analysis that promotes global security, prosperity, and freedom. He is the former John M. Olin University professor of humanities at New York University where he founded the Gallatin School in 1972 and was its dean until 1992. His social commentary has appeared in major newspapers and journals throughout the United States. London’s article, “Remembering 9/11 (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0806/ijpe/london.htm>),” is available in the State Department electronic journal, Rebuilding and Resilience: Five Years After 9/11 (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0806/ijpe/ijpe0806.htm>)

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We accept questions and comments in advance of and at any time during the program. You may also e-mail (<mailto:usinfowebchat@state.gov>) questions without registering.

The transcript of this webchat will be available on USINFO’s Webchat Station (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats.html>), where information about upcoming webchats also is available.

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